

Advent Devotional December 12, 2022

Scripture

Psalm 122

1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" 2 Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. 3 Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together. 4 To it the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. 5 For there the thrones for judgment were set up, the thrones of the house of David. 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. 7 Peace be within your walls and security within your towers." 8 For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, "Peace be within you." 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Devotional

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Words can bring gladness. Words can cause pain. I am quite sure we have all experienced both. In Psalm 122, the psalmist discovers deep gladness upon the invitation to go to the house of the Lord. Oh, that all would discover deep joy and gladness to gather with the people of God. This psalm includes a prayer for the city of Jerusalem, God's holy city, that it would be a place of peace. A place of *shalom*, of well-being. It is a prayer that Jerusalem would be a place of security, or quietness and ease, for those within its walls. Just like words, the invitation to the house of God can evoke feelings of gladness, but many find them to be words that cause pain and sorrow.

In this season of Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus into our world, can we, the new covenant dwelling place of God, be people and congregations that are a reason for gladness for all who come across our paths? A bright spot in an otherwise dark world. Can we be a people and congregations where all people can find *shalom*—genuine well-being? Not abusive words or looks of judgment. Can we be a people and congregations where all people can find security, quietness, and ease? Not condemnation and anxiety. Let the love, grace, healing, and peace of the people of God cause those around to find a source of gladness!

Prayer

Gracious and loving God, let your love and your light shine in and through your people. Make us a people of grace and healing to a hurting world. May we build-up, not tear down. May we be a people of reconciliation and justice. May we see the people around us with your eyes and love them with your heart. For the sake of your kingdom, let this work be done in me. Amen.